

READING will not welcome the sight of the notorious Loakes Park slope when they step out to face Isthmian League side Wycombe Wanderers in the FA Cup tomorrow.

And they won't be too pleased to see centre half Alan Phillips lining up against them.

For it was a goal by Phillips, a former Welsh amateur international, that sent them crashing out of the competition last season, when he was playing for Hendon.

Reading were a more formidable side twelve months ago. Their current form is poor and they go to Wycombe with only one win from their last eight games.

Some even regard the Third Division side as the under-dogs. But that's no comfort to Phillips.

"In these situations it is best to be the under-dog—that way you have nothing to lose," he said.

Worry

"The fact that some are regarding us as favourites worries me.

"However, there's no denying that we have a very good chance and Reading will have to be at their best to beat us.

"We have a lot of good, experienced players who thrive on the big occasion.

"We have done well in the Cup in recent years. The lads took Middlesbrough to a replay two years ago—and are keen to get a bit more glory.

"The big difference

By JACK STEGGLES

this time, as far as I'm concerned, could be Reading's striker Robin Friday, who did not play against Hendon last year. He is a good player, who will clearly want watching.

"But he is no stranger to the Wycombe lads. Most of them played against him in the Isthmian League when he was with Hayes."

Phillips spends his working days as an accountant in the City. And I have a hunch that Reading will be trying to figure out what went wrong as they leave.

Wycombe will be without strikers Peter Cruse and Howard Kettleborough, who are both Cup-tied.

But they expect Tony Horseman and Ian Pearson—understudy to Paul Mariner at Plymouth—to see them through in front of a 10,000 crowd.

WYCOMBE WORRY HURLEY

By ALEX MONTGOMERY

READING manager Charlie Hurley admits he is not looking forward to taking his Third Division side to Wycombe.

And it's not just the notorious Loakes Park slope that worries him.

He knows Reading could have their hands full winning against an Isthmian League outfit who have caused cup shudders in Cardiff and Middlesbrough.

Hurley said: "They are a helluva good side."

Recent league results have been disappointing for Reading and five players are on the transfer list. But Hurley added: "It's at times like this you look for character in your side."

Wycombe manager Ted Powell is sure of one thing—that **Reading's** players will be the most surprised team in the Cup when they take their first look at the Loakes Park pitch.

It drops 11ft. from side to side, dips at the corners and some say is more suited to the Grand National than the FA Cup.

Only one Reading player, Robin Friday, has played on the Wycombe slope and Powell knows just how the others will feel when they step on to it for the first time.

He claims it takes 10 matches to adjust... which is one reason why Jack Charlton's Middlesbrough struggled to draw there in the Cup three years ago.

Wycombe, current leaders of the Rothmans Isthmian League and beaten only twice in their last 20 matches, have far more than a slope going for them.

They have all-round skill and experience, including goalkeeper John Maskell with 15 years service and striker Tony Horseman with 16. And they

have five physical education teachers in the team.

Hitchin, another Isthmian team fancied to oust Football League opponents, have not given up hope of including Peter Watson in attack against Swindon.

Where they stand

Football League Division Three

	P	W	D	L	F	Pts
Shrewsbury	18	11	3	4	31	25
Wrexham	18	10	5	3	30	25
Brighton	18	10	4	4	39	24
Rothenham	18	9	6	3	32	24
Preston	18	7	8	3	31	22
Sheffield Wed	18	9	4	5	28	22
Mansfield	17	8	4	5	29	20
Chesterfield	18	8	4	6	25	20
Bury	18	8	4	6	29	20
Crystal Pal	17	9	7	1	17	19
Swindon	18	7	5	6	26	19
Lincoln	17	6	6	5	25	18
Tranmere	18	5	8	5	18	18
Gillingham	17	6	5	6	24	17
Chester	17	7	3	7	14	17
Reading	18	6	3	9	23	15
Peterboro	20	5	5	10	20	15
Grimstov	17	3	5	9	17	13
Port Vale	18	3	7	8	17	13
Walsall	18	3	6	9	17	12
Portsmouth	18	2	8	8	15	12
Northampton	17	4	3	10	17	11
York	17	4	3	10	15	11

Isthmian League Division One

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Wycombe W.	23	13	4	6	35	21	43
Dagenham	21	12	5	4	38	21	41
Ting & M'ch	23	11	4	8	50	42	37
Hitchin T.	17	11	3	3	26	16	36
L'head	21	11	2	8	32	21	35
Sutton U.	21	10	4	7	31	28	34
Wath'stow A	21	10	3	8	28	27	33
Enfield	16	9	5	2	21	13	32
L'stone	19	9	4	6	30	24	31
Bishop's S	21	9	4	8	31	26	31
S. town	18	9	3	6	28	23	30
Tilbury	19	9	2	8	19	21	20
Hendon	21	8	3	10	28	30	27
Hayes	20	7	3	10	22	30	24
Croydon	16	6	3	7	15	17	21
Shall & E.B.	20	6	3	11	15	18	20
Staines T	17	5	5	7	15	18	20
Barking	17	5	4	8	22	25	19
Woking	17	5	2	10	17	26	17
Kingston	20	4	4	12	20	32	16
D'wich H'et	20	3	6	11	24	36	15
Ilford	20	2	4	14	9	37	10